

John Branca

PARTNER

ZIFFREN BRITTENHAM BRANCA & FISCHER



WANT to renegotiate your multimillion-dollar record deal? Call John Branca.

He's been representing musicians like Michael Jackson, the Rolling Stones and Bob Dylan since 1977.

"He's not one of the music attorneys in L.A., he is the music attorney in this town," said Larry Solters of the entertainment marketing firm Scoop Marketing. "He has been on the top of the hill for a long time. His roster speaks for itself."

In recent years, the 47-year-old Branca has represented Aerosmith in a four-album, \$30 million recording contract with Sony Music; the Rolling Stones in a three-album, \$40 million record agreement with Virgin Records; Elton John in a \$39 million publishing deal with Warner/Chappell, and ZZ Top in a five-album, \$30 million agreement with BMG.

Among his more contemporary artists are Tori Amos and the Fugees. Branca also has recently begun to branch out, representing boxer Mike Tyson and acting as a strategic consultant to Prudential Securities and Forbes magazine on how they deliver content through new media such as the Internet.

Branca's music roots go back to the 1960s, when he played in a rock band that made the rounds of L.A.'s club scene, including opening for the Doors at the Whiskey.

While he eventually dedicated himself to law school, he never lost his love of music, and only a year after passing the bar exam he began representing musicians.

"It took a lot to go away from music. It was my passion," Branca said. "So after three years of law school and a year in a commercial law firm, my interest in music came back with a passion."

Despite the music industry's wild reputation, Branca's style has been described as studious and low key. And while he occasionally socializes with the likes of Jackson and Jagger, he says he prefers to keep relationships with clients as businesslike as possible.

With more than 20 years as a music attorney, Branca says much has changed for the better.

"I can say unequivocally that the level of representation for artists in the 1990s far exceeds any previous decade," he said. "The '50s and '60s were like the Stone Age. Artists back then got taken advantage of far more often than they do today. It is now such a big business, and artists are so smart and so aware, that they generally will not do anything significant without talking to an advisor."

—Jason Booth